Families at risk

Why is it certain families in difficult circumstances are able to cope, while others in the same plight simply break down? What makes such families stronger? Can their strength be passed on to other "families at risk"? In today's world, many families face daunting challenges that threaten their ability to function and, indeed, to survive.

The concept of families at risk derives from the observation that families which are not able to cope with problems in one area often demonstrate a similar inability in other areas, and thus are at risk of breakdown. On the other hand, families which are capable of coping with difficult situations demonstrate certain common traits which seem crucial to success in overcoming obstacles.

Families all over the world are indeed under sustained and heavy stress. Disease, war, poverty, famine, environmental problems and other forces are taxing them, often beyond their ability to cope. These pressures are clearly not confined to the developing world: witness the impact on families, in developing and developed countries alike, of unemployment, drugs, crime and the scourge of AIDS.

To address the problem, the United Nations system has proposed a working definition of "families at risk" as families which are unable to fulfil the basic functions of production, reproduction and socialization. These families do not meet their members' basic needs in areas such as health, nutrition, shelter, physical and emotional care and personal development.

It is also possible to consider at risk those families in which individuals lose the sense of personal and group security; families in which individual members experience physical or psychological exploitation or injustice in the distribution of rights and responsibilities; and families which are likely to break up as a consequence of political, social or economic factors.

Some risk factors arise within the family. These include domestic violence, drug and alcohol addiction, child and sexual abuse and child neglect. When such pathology becomes apparent, public or voluntary institutions may play a vital role by taking responsibility for the family's nurturing and caring functions.

Large numbers of families are at risk due to forces beyond their control. Refugee and displaced families, immigrant families, single-parent families, and those whose livelihood has been destroyed by environmental degradation are but a few examples. In these circumstances, it is necessary to identify the characteristics of families that are able to provide for their basic needs. Once identified, those characteristics can be strengthened in other families.

Refugee families face special problems. In the sudden move from home to country of asylum, husbands and wives may be separated, and children may be forced to leave their relatives. Feelings of helplessness and insecurity in an unfamiliar setting, sickness and malnutrition exert tremendous strains on those families who do survive.

But even in extreme circumstances, the family remains an irreplaceable source of strength. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has found that the most effective relief measures are those which recognize the value of the family; accordingly, that agency has developed an approach which utilizes the refugee family's resources and capacity to organize itself. The refugee family is seen as a potential unit for self-help, whose strengths must be put to full use.

Single parenthood is also an important issue. Children in families headed by single mothers are significantly more likely to live in poverty than children living with both parents. In the United States, 65 per cent of children of black single mothers are poor, compared with only 18 per cent of children of black married couples. Single-parent families where the mother is a teenager present the greatest problem, due to the general inadequacy of financial resources and lack of parental experience.

Some of the factors putting families at risk can be predicted and prevented. The prevalence of vulnerable families in the population is rarely measured: little is known about families of this type until the problems begin to manifest themselves. If left undiagnosed and untreated, vulnerable families would soon add to the burden of suffering and cost on the community. If, following early diagnosis, effective treatment prevented further breakdown, the benefit could be considerable.

Effective prevention is preferable to the more costly and less effective therapeutic approaches. "First aid" measures involve special housing, money grants and the re-equipping and stabilizing of rehoused families. When domestic violence threatens a family, or couple, immediate protection is offered by programmes such as shelters, women's and children's legal centres, telephone hot lines and therapy programmes. Long-term measures include better education and public information campaigns, as well as improvement of the status of women.

To address these problems, the United Nations system, under the auspices of the Ad Hoc Interagency Meetings on the International Year of the Family, has established a system-wide Task Force on Families at Risk to develop joint activities benefiting families endangered by vulnerability or breakdown.

The Task Force is led by the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), with the organizational support of the Secretariat for the International Year of the Family. The Task Force's first meeting was hosted by WHO in Geneva in July 1993.

The aim is to pool United Nations expertise to identify factors placing families at risk, as well as factors that enable families to cope with problems; identify tools for developing activities directed at families at risk; and promote interventions enhancing family well-being. This is one of several joint efforts being carried out by organizations and agencies of the United Nations system for the International Year of the Family.

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The family's role in socializing youth

The basic educational institution—the family—provides the fundamental apprenticeship for life. Under the right conditions, it prepares young people to realize their potential and assume useful roles as adults in society. However, the relationship of today's young people with the older generation, and in particular with their families, has become increasingly fragile. The socialization of youth is no longer a simple transmission of accepted values and attitudes.

Each individual's life is shaped by cultural norms and values and by social interaction. The family is at the core of this process and bears the primary responsibility for the socialization of youth. It is within the family, with all its echoing relationships, its reflections of a larger world, and its responsiveness to the internal world of each of its members, that the initial learning by each individual takes place.

"Learning begins at birth" is an undisputed concept: it is well established that the period from birth to the age of six is critical in the formation of intelligence, personality and social behaviour. It is in the family that the child's self-understanding and self-esteem are developed. The learning that occurs in the early months and years of life will either enhance or handicap learning throughout later life.

Tradition and change

The family is responsible for transmitting social and cultural values. Traditions are learned and enriched in families and are very much part of the inheritance passed on between generations.

At the same time, the family is a powerful agent for renewal. It regenerates and changes society by challenging accepted wisdom, expanding knowledge and scrutinizing the functioning of existing institutions. From this perspective, families are primary agents of constructive change and development.

All members of the family influence each other in complex ways. The impact of children's behaviour on their parents' personalities should not be forgotten. Children also socialize their parents in many ways. Parents learn from their children about child development, peer and sibling relationships, school, fashion and changes in society. Children serve as carriers of emerging trends, through their exposure to schools, peers and the media. In particular, immigrant and refugee parents often learn their new country's language, customs and culture from their children.

Family and education

In modern societies, the family has been performing a fundamental role in education. Despite growing support for the view that education is an essential right of all individuals, the decisions of parents still play a pivotal role in determining the amount and quality of education that any child receives, either formally or informally.

Several factors play a role in these decisions, including the economic situation of parents, their social traditions, their degree of exposure to the forces of modernization, and their level of appreciation of the importance of schooling, as well as their general attitudes to the values that education should impart.

In cultures where education is highly valued, it has been observed that a stable family system is a major factor in encouraging children to acquire education. In contrast, the decline in educational attainment in some countries has been in part attributed to the decline of family support systems.

Families can also constitute an essential mechanism in teaching respect for the human rights of all individuals. But negative circumstances, such as social problems, exploitation and abuse, are also often evident within families. It is therefore necessary to foster the development of perceptions regarding families and relationships within the family that are consistent with basic human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Challenges to the family

The tremendous transformations occurring in and around the family, combined with the early social maturation of youth, their ability to earn incomes independently of the family, and the development of a youth culture, have all diminished the influence of the family in the socialization process. Schools, peer groups and television all compete with the family in the socialization function.

At the same time, new education technologies, particularly the introduction of computer science and computer-aided instruction in schools and universities, along with the increasing variety of video and audio equipment and programmes, are changing the socialization process during school years in ways that are still being explored.

These changes are often so rapid that parents are not able to identify with their children's educational experience. Parents then face severe challenges attempting to play a supportive role in educating their children in a changed and fluid educational environment.

Another challenge is posed by single parenthood, which places a greater burden on the parent to feed, shelter and educate children, as well as provide emotional support, often without the assistance of the other parent or indeed the State.

The current financial crisis faced by many countries limits the extent of their commitment to families and education. But even in times of financial difficulty, it would be short-sighted to reduce that commitment, because education is the main way to build up the future of the child and society.

The United Nations has been increasingly concerned with such issues, and is, for instance, assisting Governments, particularly in developing countries, in formulating national policies which include measures to support the socialization function of the family.

The year 1995—the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations—will see three major events in the social domain: the World Summit for Social Development, the Ninth Congress on Crime Prevention and the Treatment of Offenders and the Fourth World Conference on Women. That year will also mark the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year, observed by the United Nations in 1985. Following the International Year of the Family in 1994, 1995 will provide the United Nations, in cooperation with the many organizations dealing with youth issues, yet another occasion for assessing existing global activities and launching new ones to strengthen youth-related concerns.

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The International Year of the Family and the United Nations system

The United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 44/82 of 8 December 1989, proclaimed 1994 as the International Year of the Family (IYF), with the theme: "Family: resources and responsibilities in a changing world". In that resolution, the Assembly decided that the major activities for the observance of the Year should be concentrated at the local, regional and national levels, assisted by the United Nations and its system of organizations.

In response to this Assembly decision, 34 concerned offices, bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations system are involved in the preparation and observance of the Year and/or are carrying out activities of direct or indirect relevance to families.

This leaflet provides a brief indication of the family-related concerns and priorities of these entities. It also provides information on their IYF focal points. An inventory of action regarding families and the IYF by the United Nations system is scheduled for publication in early 1994.

Ad hoc inter-agency meetings on IYF

IYF-related efforts of concerned organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system are coordinated through the mechanism of ad hoc inter-agency meetings on the Year. Three meetings have been held and a fourth one is scheduled for March 1994. The participating entities have jointly issued an inter-agency statement on the Year and have initiated several substantive and promotional projects for joint implementation, including a project on families at risk.

The Coordinator and the Secretariat for the International Year of the Family

The Coordinator and the Secretariat for the International Year of the Family, within the United Nations Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, serves as a catalyst, facilitator and coordinator of action for IYF and regarding families, both within and outside the United Nations system. It provides substantive, promotional and organizational support to the United Nations intergovernmental bodies and to IYF partners.

- Coordinator for the International Year of the Family: **Mr. Henryk J. Sokalski**
- Responsible for inter-agency matters: **Mr. George Puthuppally**, Social Affairs Officer

The IYF Secretariat
United Nations Office at Vienna
P.O. Box 500, A-1400 Vienna, Austria
Tel: (43-1) 21131/4223 or 5203;
Fax: (43-1) 237497 or 232156
Telex: 135612 uno a;
Telegram: UNATIONS VIENNA

United Nations system entities

United Nations Secretariat

Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development

In addition to the Secretariat for the International Year of the Family, several programmes within the Department are directly concerned with the family and IYF.

Division for the Advancement of Women

The Division, whose work is closely related to family issues, carries out several activities that promote a

new social contract between family members. The situation of female-headed households and domestic violence against women are issues of special concern.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Ms. Maria Hartl, Social Affairs Officer,
  Division for the Advancement of Women
  Department for Policy Coordination and
  Sustainable Development
  United Nations, New York, N.Y. 10017, U.S.A.
  Tel: (212) 963 3140; Fax: (212) 963 4116

Social Policy and Development Division

The various programmes of the Division have a direct bearing on the family. They deal with developmental social welfare policies and programmes, youth policies and programmes, disability issues and population ageing. The family dimensions of these issues are highlighted.

- IYF Focal Points:
  Mr. Michael Stubbs,
  Developmental Social Welfare;
  Mr. Amr Ghaleb, Youth Policies and Programmes;
  Mr. Mamadou Barry, Disabled Persons;
  Mr. Alexandre Sidorenko, Ageing;
  Department for Policy Coordination
  and Sustainable Development
  United Nations, New York, N.Y. 10017, U.S.A.
  Tel: (212) 963 3171; Fax: (212) 963 3062

Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis

Population Division

The Population Division undertakes research relating to the family, including nuptiality and marital status, reproduction, contraception, status of women, living arrangements, ageing and migration.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Mr. Joseph Chamie, Officer-in-Charge,
  Population Division, Department for Economic
  and Social Information and Policy Analysis
  United Nations, New York, N.Y. 10017, U.S.A.
  Tel: (212) 963 3181; Fax: (212) 963 2147

Statistical Division (UNSTAT)

The UNSTAT collects, analyses and publishes statistical information on family and family-related issues as well as makes international recommendations on concepts and definitions concerning family-household for developing comparable statistics and indicators in this field.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Mr. William Seltzer, Director,
  Statistical Division (UNSTAT)
  Department for Economic and Social
  Information and Policy Analysis
  United Nations, New York, N.Y. 10017, U.S.A.
  Tel: (212) 963 4996; Fax: (212) 963 4116

Department of Administration and Management

Office of Conference Services (OCS)

In carrying out the official programme of meetings and conferences of the United Nations, OCS provides conference services to those of the IYF and to United Nations-sponsored IYF meetings and events. This includes interpretation and meetings records services, and the editing, translation, text-processing, reproduction and distribution of official IYF documents and many IYF publications.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Ms. Françoise Cestac, Director,
  Office of Conference Services
  Department of Administration and Management
  United Nations, New York, N.Y. 10017, U.S.A.
  Tel: (212) 963 6548; Fax: (212) 963 9452

Department of Public Information (DPI)

DPI is carrying out various activities that are directed at the news media, non-governmental organizations, governments, educational institutions and the general public, in order to increase awareness on family issues and to build up support for activities to improve the situation of families around the world.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Mr. Willard Hass, Information Officer,
  Social Development Issues
  Department of Public Information
  United Nations
  New York, N.Y. 10017, U.S.A.
  Tel: (212) 963 0353; Fax: (212) 963 4556

Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)

In the context of its activities relating to the provision of systematic and specialized information and analyses, ECE devotes attention to family-related issues, such as population and fertility.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Mr. Miroslaw Macura, Chief,
  Population Activities Unit
  Division of Economic Analysis and Projections
  Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)
  Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
  Tel: (41-22) 917 1234; Fax: (41-22) 917 0123

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

The pivotal role of the family in development is recognized in the Social Development Strategy for the ESCAP Region towards the Year 2000 and Beyond, and various family-specific activities are undertaken by the Commission in the context of the Strategy's implementation.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Mr. Edward Van Roy, Chief,
  Social Development Division
  Economic and Social Commission
  for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
  The United Nations Building
  Rajdamnern Avenue, Bangkok 10200, Thailand
  Tel: (662) 2829161-200; Fax: (662) 280 6024

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

Family-specific priorities of ECLAC include the provision of up-to-date information and analysis of the current situation of the family, conducting policy-oriented studies and elaborating proposals for governmental action.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Mr. Rubín Kaztman,
  Senior Social Affairs Officer,
  Social Development Division
  Economic Commission for Latin
  America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
  Casilla 179D, Santiago, Chile
  Tel: (56) 208 5051; Fax: (56) 208 0252

Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

ECA's major focus regarding families is analysing and promoting accurate knowledge on the impact of recent socio-economic changes and developments on the family, so that adequate policy and programme interventions can be undertaken.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Mr. Sadig Rasheed, Chief,
  Public Administration and
  Social Development Division,
  Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)
  P.O. Box 3001, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
  Tel: (251) 511 056; Fax: (251) 514 416

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Priorities of ESCWA regarding families include reviewing and analysing the impact of socio-economic changes on the Arab family, harmonizing the role of women within and outside the family, assessing the needs of the family in terms of shelter, and surveying families in war-torn areas with special emphasis on integration of families/women returnees and migrants in their societies of origin.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Ms. Fatima S. Kassem, Chief,
  Women and Development Unit
  Social Development Division
  Economic and Social Commission
  for Western Asia (ESCWA)
  P.O. Box 927115, Amman, Jordan
  Tel: (962-6) 694 351 and 606847;
  Fax: (962-6) 694 981

United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV)

Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch: UNOV's programmes on crime prevention and criminal justice regard the breakdown of the family as a significant factor in the causation of crime. The valuable role of strong family ties in resocialization of offenders is stressed. Domestic violence is accorded special attention.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Mr. Kurt Neudek, Senior Crime Prevention Officer,
  Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch
  United Nations Office at Vienna
  Vienna International Centre
  P.O. Box 500, A-1400 Vienna, Austria
  Tel: (43-1) 21131/4229; Fax: (43-1) 232 156

United Nations Centre for Human Rights

Several programmes of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights have a direct relevance to the goals of the IYF, since the protection of human rights has an impact on the enjoyment by the family of the rights to

security, privacy and welfare. The promotion of the rights of the individual, in particular women, children and vulnerable groups such as disabled persons, migrant workers, displaced persons and refugees, is also relevant to the rights of the family.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Mrs. Helga Klein,
  United Nations Centre for Human Rights
  United Nations Office at Geneva
  Palais des Nations
  CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
  Tel: (41-22) 917 3955;
  Fax: (41-22) 917 0118

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

Habitat's programmes have a direct bearing on the quality of life of the world's growing number of households and families. Priority is given to improving the physical living conditions and environmental health conditions of families and households, supporting the role of women in human settlements, and improving the living conditions of the elderly and disabled in human settlements.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Mr. Mathias Hundsalz, Chief,
  Shelter and Community Services Section
  United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)
  P.O. Box 30030, Nairobi, Kenya
  Tel: (254-2) 621 234; Fax: (254-2) 624 265

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

UNEP highlights the role of families in environmental protection and has adopted the slogan "One Earth, One Family" for the 1994 World Environment Day campaign. Through its awareness raising campaigns and outreach programmes, UNEP will empower families to change consumption patterns and adopt sustainable lifestyles.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Mr. Tore J. Brevik /
  Ms. Meryem Amar,
  United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
  P.O. Box 30552, Nairobi, Kenya
  Tel: (254-2) 621234; Fax: (254-2) 230084

United Nations bodies

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Refugees are among the world's most vulnerable families. UNHCR assists 20 million persons worldwide, most of whose families are fractured by war and conflict. While special attention is given to family reunification, UNHCR assists unaccompanied children, women-headed households, unaccompanied elderly, disabled persons and individuals without family support. A community-based approach which involves refugees in solving problems is adopted to provide protection and support to families during this period of transition. UNHCR works closely with governments, governmental agencies and non-governmental agencies to achieve a better life for refugees.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Mrs. Marie Lobo,
  Senior Social Services Officer,
  Programme and Technical Support Service
  United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
  Case postale 2500
  CH-1211 Geneva 2 Depôt, Switzerland
  Tel: (41-22) 739 8544;
  Fax: (41-22) 739 8309

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF's mandate to assist children and women and to act as the global advocate for children involves it directly with the role of families in providing the primary environment for the child. Families as the basic units of society are the focus of programme action and are being mobilized and strengthened in UNICEF-assisted programmes for the survival, development and protection of children. A particular concern is gender equity, both in the roles and responsibilities of parents and children within the family context, and achieving the goals of the declaration adopted by the World Summit for Children.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Dr. Sreelakshmi Gururaja, Project Officer,
  Development Programmes for Women
  United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
  Three United Nations Plaza
  New York, N.Y. 10017, U.S.A.
  Tel: (212) 702 7263; Fax: (212) 702 7148

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

UNIFEM's operational activities, which focus primarily on the economic advancement of women, contribute to the improvement of the quality of life for families. A priority concern is highlighting women's role as income-earners and their contributions to the economic well-being of the family.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Ms. Beti Astolfi, Senior Adviser,
  Global Activities, United Nations Development
  Fund for Women (UNIFEM)
  304 East 45th St. 6th floor
  New York, N.Y. 10017, U.S.A.
  Tel: (212) 906 6442; Fax: (212) 906 6705

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

UNFPA's mandate in the area of population and development includes research on the impact of demographic change on the structure of families and family formation. In its operational activities, the Fund seeks to improve the overall well-being of families, particularly through its promotion of quality family services and safe motherhood. Special attention is focused on responsible parenthood and the achievement of gender equality.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Ms. Catherine S. Pierce, Chief,
  Women, Population and Development Branch
  United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
  220 East 42nd Street
  New York, N.Y. 10017, U.S.A.
  Tel: (212) 297 5000; Fax: (212) 370 0201

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

UNDP's activities, which seek to accelerate the economic and social development of developing countries, affect and benefit families. Special attention is given to women as agents and beneficiaries of development and to promoting a gender-in-development dimension. Alleviation of poverty and prevention of HIV/AIDS are important priorities which have a direct bearing on families.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Ms. Elizabeth Lwanga, Manager,
  Gender in Development Programme
  United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
  One United Nations Plaza
  New York, N.Y. 10017, U.S.A.
  Tel: (212) 906 5000; Fax: (212) 906 5776

United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP)

UNDCP recognizes the important role of the family in the various aspects of the fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking. Special attention is given to the role of the family and grass-root parent movements in reducing demand for drugs and to supporting non-governmental organizations in relevant activities.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Ms. Liselotte Waldheim-Natural, Head,
  Inter-Organization Cooperation Division
  United Nations International Drug Control
  Programme (UNDCP), P.O. Box 500
  Vienna International Centre
  A-1400 Vienna, Austria
  Tel: (43-1) 21131/4170; Fax: (43-1) 232 156

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

UNRWA's activities focus on developmental and family-oriented services. Emphasis is on the family as a focal point for care. Its programmes in the areas of education, health and social services are of great significance to the family life of the more than 2.7 million Palestine refugees.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Mr. Richard Hooper,
  Assistant to Chef de Cabinet,
  United Nations Relief and
  Works Agency for Palestine Refugees
  in the Near East (UNRWA)
  Vienna International Centre
  P.O. Box 700, A-1400 Vienna, Austria
  Tel: (43-1) 21131/4479;
  Fax: (43-1) 232 156

United Nations University (UNU)

UNU and its research and training centres, especially the World Institute for Development Economics Research (WIDER), conduct several research and training activities on the family and family-related issues. Specific topics include household, women's fertility rates as well as family structure, formation and development.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Ms. Valentine Moghadam,
  Senior Research Fellow, UNU Institute
  for Development Economics Research
  (UNU / WIDER)
  Annankatu 42 C, 00100 Helsinki, Finland
  Tel: (358-0) 693 841; Fax: (358-0) 693 8548

United Nations research institutes

United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI)

Family-related issues receive due attention in the activities of UNICRI, including in its technical assistance and advisory services. Priority issues include domestic violence, child abuse within the family and women in the criminal justice system.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Mr. Ugo Leone, Director,
  United Nations Interregional
  Crime and Justice
  Research Institute (UNICRI)
  Via Guilia, 52
  00186 Rome, Italy
  Tel: (04-06) 687 7437;
  Fax: (04-06) 689 2638

United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)

Family issues are among the topics addressed in UNRISD's research activities on aspects of contemporary social development, such as adjustment and social change, environment, sustainable development and social change, social participation, and social impact of changes in ownership relations in production.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Mr. Dharam Ghai, Director,
  United Nations Research Institute
  for Social Development (UNRISD)
  16 Av. Jean-Trembley, 1209 Petit-Saconnex
  Palais des Nations
  CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
  Tel: (41-22) 798 8400; Fax: (41-22) 740 0791

International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)

INSTRAW emphasizes the changing roles, activities and status of women in the family in its research and training programmes as well as in its information collection and dissemination, in order to stimulate and assist the advancement of women and their integration in the development process, both as participants and beneficiaries.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Ms. Margaret Shields, Director,
  International Research and Training Institute
  for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)
  Calle Cisar Nicolas Penson No. 102-A
  Santo Domingo, D.N., Dominican Republic
  Tel: (809) 685-2111; Fax: (809) 685-2117

United Nations joint bodies

World Food Council (WFC)

WFC approaches family issues from the perspective of family food security and the role of women as nurturers, guardians of family health, food producers and generators of family income.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Mr. Abdou Ciss, Officer-in-Charge
  World Food Council (WFC)
  Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
  00100 Rome, Italy
  Tel: (04-06) 579 71; Fax: (04-06) 574 5091

World Food Programme (WFP)

The World Food Programme supports low-income, food-deficit families, including many female-headed households, by using food aid. WFP supports human resource development (i.e., mothers and pre-school child feeding and primary school feeding) and funds economic and social infrastructure development through Food for Work and community development projects. Furthermore WFP support aims at improving family income and assets through land, agriculture and natural resource development projects. WFP support is provided both for development projects and in emergency situations.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Ms. Els Kocken, Programme Adviser,
  World Food Programme (WFP)
  Via Cristofo Colombo, 426
  00145 Rome, Italy
  Tel: (04-06) 5228 2394; Fax: (04-06) 5228 2833

Specialized agencies

International Labour Organisation (ILO)

The activities of the ILO, which encompass the defence and promotion of human rights, employment promotion, enterprise development, the improvement of working conditions and the guarantee of an appropriate level of social security and welfare, have a direct impact on the family. Of special relevance is the implementation of its Convention No. 156 and corresponding Recommendation No. 165 concerning workers with family responsibilities. The Convention calls on Member States to make it an aim of national policy to enable persons with family responsibilities, who are engaged or wish to engage in employment, to exercise their right to do so without being subject to discrimination.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Ms. Marie-Claire Séguret, Chief,
  Work, Gender and Family Section
  International Labour Office (ILO)
  CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland
  Tel: (41-22) 799 6732; Fax: (41-22) 798 8685

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

FAO carries out activities of direct relevance to families in five areas: providing advice to Member States on supporting women as well as diverse forms of families through policies and programmes; identifying family members as participants and beneficiaries in FAO technical assistance projects; collecting data and statistics and carrying out studies on family types and their relations to production and delivery systems; focusing on food security at the family level; and training in gender issues in relation to programme, project and policy formulation.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Ms. Leena Kirjavainen, Chief,
  Women in Agricultural Production
  and Rural Development Service
  Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
  Via delle Terme di Caracalla
  00100 Rome, Italy
  Tel: (04-06) 52251;
  Fax: (04-06) 52253152, 52255155, 5782610

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Many UNESCO activities relating to education, science and culture are directly concerned with families and seek to support their role and effective functioning. Aspects covered include the family, education and development; education of women and girls; the child's development within the family; the rights of the child in the context of the family; family and the dynamics of demography; family and the sciences; the promotion and transmission of culture.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Mr. John Bennett, Coordinator,
  Young Child and Family Project
  United Nations Educational, Scientific
  and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
  7, place de Fontenoy 75700 Paris, France
  Tel: (33-1) 4568 0815; Fax: (33-1) 4065 9405

World Health Organization (WHO)

In order to promote the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health, WHO fosters renewed efforts and new approaches to family health policies and programmes within Member States. It seeks to support the role of the family in health promotion by

improving knowledge of health and disease and the use of appropriate technology in dealing with those issues, as well as providing health-care infrastructure, based on a primary health-care approach. It emphasizes the changing role of women in family planning, safe motherhood, and child survival and development. National policies on HIV/AIDS and the impact of HIV/AIDS on families are important priorities.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Mr. Mark Belsey, Programme Manager,
  Maternal and Child Health and Family Planning
  World Health Organization (WHO)
  1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland
  Tel: (41-22) 791 3359; Fax: (41-22) 791 0746

World Bank

The World Bank has as its highest priority the alleviation of poverty, and therefore it lends to improve the well-being of the population. Although its activities, including lending for education, health and nutrition, are not directly focused on families, they benefit all family members, including women and children. The family and household are the focal point for poverty assessment studies, currently being undertaken in all borrowing countries to ascertain where interventions are most effective.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Mr. Carlston B. Boucher,
  Principal Economic Affairs Officer,
  International Economic Relations Division
  Operations Policy Department
  World Bank, 1818 H Street, N.W.
  Washington, D.C. 20433, USA
  Tel: (202) 477 1234; Fax: (202) 477 6391

Universal Postal Union (UPU)

UPU facilitates awareness-raising on the role of the family and family-related issues by encouraging national postal administrations to issue postal stamps on these topics.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Mr. Alwaldo Cardoso Botto de Barros,
  Director-General, Universal Postal Union (UPU)
  Case postale 3000, Berne 15, Switzerland
  Tel: (41-31) 350 3111; Fax: (41-31) 350 3110

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

WMO programmes, such as world weather watch programme, world climate programme, applications of meteorology programme, atmospheric research and environment programme, hydrology and water resource programme to name a few, contribute to the protection of life and property and to the promotion of production activities in the areas of agriculture, industry, forestry, animal husbandry, etc., as well as to the well-being of families.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Mr. S. Chacowry, Special Assistant
  to the Secretary-General,
  World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
  41, Avenue Giuseppe-Motta, Case postale No. 2300
  CH-1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland
  Tel: (41-22) 730 8111; Fax: (41-22) 734 2326

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

IFAD activities affect families, as IFAD provides financing for projects and programmes specifically designed to introduce, expand or improve food production systems and strengthen related policies and institutions within the framework of national priorities and strategies.

- IYF Focal Point:
  Ms. W. B. Eide, Technical Adviser,
  Nutrition, Technical Advisory Unit
  International Fund for Agricultural
  Development (IFAD)
  107, Via del Serafico, 00142 Rome, Italy
  Tel.: (04-06) 545 91; Fax: (04-06) 504 3463

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